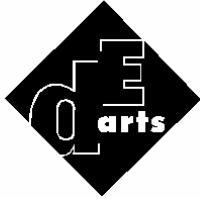


**Delaware Division  
of the Arts**



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March 27, 2006

## **News Release: For Immediate Release**

### **DELAWARE DIVISION OF THE ARTS ANNOUNCES POETRY OUT LOUD: NATIONAL RECITATION CONTEST**

***High school students throughout Delaware to compete in national poetry  
recitation contest at the Schwartz Center in Dover***

(Wilmington, DE) — On April 11, high school students from across Delaware will compete in the state finals of Poetry Out Loud, a national poetry recitation contest. The event, free and open to the public, will be held at the Schwartz Center for the Arts at 226 S. State Street, Dover, at 7:00 p.m. with a reception following. The Honorable Ruth Ann Minner has been invited to speak, and will present the awards to the winning students.

The winners from their respective high schools are expected to recite two poems from memory, selected from an anthology developed by the Poetry Foundation, before a panel of adjudicators, including: Fleda Brown, Delaware's Poet Laureate; and Secretary of State, Harriet Smith Windsor and State Senator, David Sokola. The following high schools will be represented: Cab Calloway School for the Arts, Concord High School, Delcastle Technical High School, Delmar High School, Glasgow High School, Padua Academy, Polytech High School, Salesianum High School, Sussex Central High School and William Penn High School. The winner will go on to the national competition in Washington DC in May 2006.

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## POETRY OUT LOUD CONTEST

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As part of the program, music will be performed by Augustine Mercante, countertenor, and accompanist Hiroko Yamazaki.

Created by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Poetry Foundation, in cooperation with the fifty state arts agencies, this program encourages high school students to memorize and perform great poems. Poetry Out Loud invites the dynamic aspects of slam poetry, spoken word, and theater into the English class. This exciting new program helps students master public speaking skills, build self-confidence, and learn about their literary heritage.

Each winner at the state level will receive \$200 and an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington to compete for the national championship. The state winner's school will receive a \$500 stipend for the purchase of poetry books. A runner-up in each state will receive \$100, with \$200 for his or her school library. The Poetry Foundation will be awarding \$50,000 total in scholarships and school stipends at the National Finals, with at least a \$20,000 college scholarship for the Poetry Out Loud National Champion.

The Delaware Division of the Arts is coordinating the program at the state level. Delaware public, private, and parochial schools received invitations to participate in December 2005. Interested schools sent in registration forms and received free curriculum materials, including: print and online poetry anthologies, a program guide to help instructors teach recitation and performance, an audio CD featuring distinguished actors and writers, promotional and media guides, and access to a comprehensive website. Curriculum materials are also available on the Poetry Out Loud Website, and can be used by schools not involved in the official 2006 contest.

"Poetry, by its very nature, lends itself to the spoken word. *Poetry Out Loud* not only reinforces an ancient tradition, but also supports contemporary trends in the public presentation of the printed word," says Paul Weagraff, deputy director of DDOA and state coordinator of *Poetry Out Loud*.

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**About the Poetry Foundation**

The Poetry Foundation, publisher of Poetry magazine, has embarked on an ambitious plan to bring the best poetry before the largest possible audience. In the coming year, the Foundation will launch a major new poetry website and sponsor an unprecedented study to understand poetry's place in American culture. Founded in Chicago by Harriet Monroe in 1912, Poetry is the oldest monthly devoted to verse in the English-speaking world. Harriet Monroe's "Open Door" policy, set forth in Volume I of the magazine, remains the most succinct statement of Poetry's mission: to print the best poetry written today, in whatever style, genre, or approach.

**About the National Endowment for the Arts**

The National Endowment for the Arts is a public agency dedicated to supporting excellence in the arts—both new and established—bringing the arts to all Americans, and providing leadership in arts education. Established by Congress in 1965 as an independent agency of the federal government, the Endowment is the nation's largest annual funder of the arts, bringing great art to all 50 states, including rural areas, inner cities, and military bases.

**About the Delaware Division of the Arts**

The Delaware Division of the Arts (DDOA), a branch of the Delaware Department of State, is dedicated to promoting and developing the arts throughout the state. Together with its advisory body, the Delaware State Arts Council (DSAC), the Division administers grants and programs that support arts programming, educate the public, increase awareness of the arts, and integrate the arts into all facets of Delaware life.

For more information about this national initiative, visit [www.poetryoutloud.org](http://www.poetryoutloud.org)